

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 216

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?

Hartford

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

Hartford

Will this activity occur after August 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

272276-Roberts2020

Organization Name

Hartford Stage Company, Inc.

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

060790484

Principal Contact Name

Jennifer Levine

Title

Development Director

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Phone

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Address

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Hartford, Connecticut 06103
United States
[Map It](#)

Website

<https://www.hartfordstage.org>

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Amount requested this application

\$25,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Hartford Stage's mission is to enlighten, entertain, and educate by creating theatrical works of the highest caliber that have a transformative impact on our audiences, our community, and our field.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Hartford Stage is one of Connecticut's premier producing theatres. Located in the state's capital city, our theatre is an award-winning regional attraction and an economic powerhouse for the downtown area. Hartford Stage, founded in 1964 by Jacques Cartier, is a home for world-class productions of plays and musicals; education programs that serve more students than all the state's other producing theatres combined; and engagement activities that use the art on our stage to foster dialogue and build community. Our theatre has earned many of the nation's most distinguished awards, including the 1989 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre and the 1974 Margo Jones Award for Development of New Works.

Hartford Stage welcomes a core audience of more than 35,000 patrons (including more than 3,600 subscribers) to plays and musicals produced at our mainstage home, the 480-seat John W. Huntington Theatre. Artistic Director Melia Bensussen (a fluent Spanish speaker raised in Mexico) and her co-leader, Managing Director Cynthia Rider, share a vision for recommitting Hartford Stage to its home city and activating the theatre as a civic space for the state's capital region. Hartford Stage is a historically white institution in a global-majority city whose population is 45% Latinx. We view the work of equity, diversity, and inclusion as essential components to the life of our theatre and the vitality of our art form. A cornerstone of Hartford Stage's work to connect with its community is our multi-layered partnership with Hartford Public Library. Through this collaboration, Hartford Stage maintains a micro-branch of the library at our theatre; engages a cadre of "neighborhood ambassadors," recruited from across the city, who help to knit the stories audiences see at Hartford Stage into their neighbors' daily lives; and provides more than 2,000 free tickets to library cardholders every season.

Describe the demographics of your audience/people served by your activities.

Approximately 71% of our audience is drawn from the Greater Hartford area, with another 21% coming from elsewhere in Connecticut and 8% coming from out of state. About 70% of Hartford Stage patrons are white, 16% Black, and 12% Latinx, with 2% from other ethnic groups.

Hartford Stage is a predominantly white institution in a global-majority city whose population is 45% Latinx. Further engagement with audiences of color is a priority for our organization.

Describe your organization's governance.

The Hartford Stage Board of Directors meets seven times per season and board committees (e.g. Finance, Audit, Governance) are scheduled throughout each season. A quorum of board members attends each meeting. There has been no substantial change to Hartford Stage's executive leadership since our last application to the Roberts Foundation.

Describe the diversity of your board.

83% of board members are white; 14% Latinx; and 3% are Black. 54% are female and 46% are male.

A contingent of Hartford Stage board and staff members has been accepted to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's Board Diversity Initiative, led by Thought Partner Solutions. Together with an equity consultant, they are working to refine Hartford Stage's board-level DEI efforts and board development protocols.

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What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?

100%. Hartford Stage Board members are active participants in fundraising for the organization. Each contributes within their means every season.

Project Name

Trouble in Mind

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

TROUBLE IN MIND, a play by Alice Childress, will perform at Hartford Stage May 25 through June 18, 2023. This production will be directed by Joyce C. Willis Fellow Christopher D. Betts. TROUBLE IN MIND is a 1950's landmark play with resonant themes that remain relevant today. This dramatic satire tracks the nuanced, simmering tension between the artists of a biracial acting company working on a Broadway-bound premiere. As they rehearse, questions about the play emerge, igniting an impassioned debate about race, power, the roles we play on stage, and the roles we play in life. In Hartford Stage's timely revival, the theatre becomes an arena wherein we explore how — and why — we use our voices.

Total estimated project budget

\$408,961.00

Project start/opening

05/25/2023

Project end/closing

06/18/2023

Project venue

John W. Huntington Theatre

Project town

Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Hartford Stage estimates that 5,000-7,000 patrons will attend TROUBLE IN MIND. An estimated breakdown of ticket sales is 4,200 subscriber tickets (70% of all ticket sales; subscriber packages cost \$300-\$1200 per season), 1,200 single tickets (20% of all ticket sales; single tickets cost \$40-\$120 each), and 600 comp tickets (10% of all ticket sales).

TROUBLE IN MIND will play approximately 20 performances May 25 through June 18, 2023.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

TROUBLE IN MIND was announced as part of Hartford Stage's 2022-23 season production lineup in winter 2022. Marketing for this season of performances is already underway.

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Hartford Stage will promote TROUBLE IN MIND in print and digital news media and in billboard, print, television, and radio ads. All Hartford Stage productions are promoted on social media. Hartford Stage has 33k Facebook followers, 8.9k Instagram followers, and 8.9k Twitter followers.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Funding from the Roberts Foundation will support actor payroll, designer fees, production expenses (e.g. scenery, costumes), and royalties for Hartford Stage's 2023 production of TROUBLE IN MIND.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

As a production sponsor for TROUBLE IN MIND, your Foundation's name and logo will appear on the production's webpage at www.hartfordstage.org and on the cast listing page of print and digital programs. The Foundation will be recognized for 14 months in online and print (production program) donor listings.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

Hartford Stage defines artistic excellence as the integrity with which we approach our work, the investment that we make in our art, and the impact our art has on the artists who create it and the audiences who experience it. Hartford Stage prides itself on its longstanding reputation for producing world-class productions of plays and musicals of the highest artistic caliber.

How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?

With our production of TROUBLE IN MIND Hartford Stage is reviving a lesser known but nonetheless seminal work of theatre written by a Black woman playwright. The original Off-Broad production of this show opened in 1955 and was planned to transfer to Broadway in 1957; however, that premiere was cancelled after playwright Alice Childress refused to water down her play's critique of race in the nation and the industry. TROUBLE IN MIND only recently had its Broadway debut in November 2021, for which it was nominated for multiple Tony Awards.

At a time when race and equity are top of mind for the American public and igniting change within the theatre industry itself, Childress' play is starkly relevant. This production will directly serve Hartford

Stage's mission as an enlightening and impactful theatrical work that exemplifies artistic excellence.

How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?

We are eager to hear our audiences react to TROUBLE IN MIND, and excited for the conversations that this production will spark in our lobby and (we hope) around the dinner table at home. TROUBLE IN MIND is a play about race, theatre, and race IN theatre. Audiences will be challenged to consider what role they play as consumers of art in a contemporary America grappling with the same racial tensions that inspired this play in the 1950s. We expect Christopher Bett's production of Childress' classic play to be inspiring, evocative, and transformational for Hartford Stage patrons.

How will this project be evaluated?

Hartford Stage will measure public response to and the effectiveness of our production of TROUBLE IN MIND using box office records, audience surveys, and published reviews.

Post-show audience surveys distributed via email allow patrons to report their level of satisfaction with their experience at Hartford Stage. Online and print reviews by local theatre critics will help us gauge the community's reaction to and interest in our production of TROUBLE IN MIND.

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Ticket sales trends (including subscription sales) are tracked against annual revenue goals. The number of patrons attending performances is recorded in our patron database and routinely assessed.

Cover letter

- [Cover-Letter-HSC.pdf](#)

Board list

- [Board-HSC.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [IRS-Letter-HSC.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [Audit-HSC.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [Budget-Ops-HSC-FY22.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [Budget-Ops-HSC-FY23.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Balance-Sheet-HSC.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Budget-Project-HSC.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- [Hartford-Stage-Company-Inc.- -Grantee-Reporting-Form-.pdf](#)

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Hartford Stage thanks the Roberts Foundation for your \$75,000 gift (awarded May 26, 2022) in support of the Joyce C. Willis Fund for Excellence and Equity in the Arts Residency. Your grant provides partial underwriting for Willis Fellow Christopher D. Betts who will direct our 2023 production of TROUBLE IN MIND.

Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?

Yes

Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?

Yes